

May 9, 2002

In this issue:

- *HECB outlines plan for determining 2002-03 SNG awards*
- *Higher education becoming less affordable for many*
- *IRS proposes more flexible tax credit reporting requirements for colleges*
- *NASFAA and TERI launch early awareness Web site*
- *Retention data understate degree persistence rates*

HECB outlines plan for determining 2002-03 SNG awards

Memorandum provides rationale, timeline, and procedures for setting grant amounts; decision expected later this month

On May 8, the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) sent a memorandum to financial aid directors outlining its plan for setting State Need Grant (SNG) award amounts for the 2002-03 academic year. In the memorandum, Becki Collins, director of education services, indicated that the plan for establishing grant amounts for next year encompasses three important elements: (1) institutions' need to know grant amounts at the earliest possible date; (2) legislative budget directives; and (3) HECB-adopted policy goals for the SNG program.

The memorandum is available online at:
<http://www.hecb.wa.gov/paying/FAMemo1.pdf>.

Higher education becoming less affordable for many
New report shows aid funding has not kept pace with rising costs

It is no surprise to aid administrators that college is becoming less affordable for poor and middle-class families. A recent report by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, however, has shined a bright light on the topic in the national media. "Losing Ground: A National Status Report on the Affordability of American Higher



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Education” identifies five national trends that it argues could lead students with the least means to give up any hope of attending college:

- Increases in tuition have made colleges and universities less affordable for most American families.
- Federal and state financial aid to students has not kept pace with increases in tuition.
- More students and families at all income levels are borrowing more than ever before to pay for college.
- The steepest increases in public college tuition have been imposed during times of greatest economic hardship.
- State financial support of public higher education has increased, but tuition has increased more.

The report has been featured in several state and national news stories and op-ed pieces available online, including *The Seattle Times*, [State college are growing too pricey for middle class](#); *The New York Times*, [More family income committed to college](#) and [Enrolling economic diversity](#); and *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (available only to subscribers with passwords), [Report urges disciplined spending by states to make college more affordable](#).

You can download the report from www.highereducation.org.

IRS proposal would ease tax credit reporting requirements for colleges

The Internal Revenue Service has proposed new rules that would simplify college reporting requirements for the Hope and Lifetime Learning tax credits. According to a May 1 article in the *Chronicle*, the proposed rules would eliminate a requirement that institutions report to the IRS the name, address, and Social Security number of anyone who could claim a student as a dependent for tax purposes. The new rules would also provide colleges more flexibility in reporting individual student expense information.

The proposed rules, published on April 29, 2002, are available online: [GPO Federal Register Online](#). The IRS will accept public comment on the regulations until July 29.

The article is available online to *Chronicle* subscribers: [IRS proposal would ease reporting requirements for colleges on tax credits](#).

NASFAA and TERI launch early awareness Web site

Online resource helps organizers build college readiness programs for younger students

The key to opportunity and success in higher education often hinges on advanced planning — academic and financial. For too many students, this kind of planning

doesn't happen early enough. They arrive at their junior or senior years of high school without the courses they need for admission and believe the costs of education effectively make college unreachable.

An increasing number of schools and community organizations have initiated early awareness programs to help young students understand the benefits of higher education and develop the skills and knowledge they need to enroll and succeed in college.

The National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA) and The Education Resources Institute (TERI) have launched a new Web site — <http://www.nasfaa.org/subhomes/abcs/index.html> — to help financial aid administrators and others develop early awareness programs.

"The ABC's of Early Awareness" is an online toolkit with step-by-step instructions to help program organizers identify age-appropriate programs, plan activities, address budget constraints, and implement and evaluate the program. The site also includes information about and a link to NASFAA's "Planning and Conducting a Financial Aid Night" Web site.

Retention data understate college completion rates

More students stay in college and persist to a four-year degree than previously assumed, according to a report released this week by the American Council on Education (ACE).

The report, titled "Access and Persistence: Findings from 10 years of Longitudinal Research on Students," finds that retention data "greatly understate" the rate at which students actually complete their undergraduate educations. Two-thirds of students in baccalaureate programs complete their degrees within five years, the report says.

ACE's Jacqueline King told the *Chronicle*, "Even if students leave the first college in which they enrolled, they do not necessarily drop out of the postsecondary system; they often transfer to another school."

The Chronicle summarizes the report online for subscribers with passwords: [Retention data understate how many students complete college, report says](#).

You can read the report online: [Access and persistence](#).

That's all for this edition!